

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

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S E C R E T USNATO 0816

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DEPARTMENT PLEASE REPEAT AS DESIRED

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, AO, IT

SUBJECT: ITALIAN REPORT ON POLITICAL AND MILITARY SITUATION
IN ANGOLA

FOLLOWING IS TEXT (INFORMAL MISSION TRANSLATION OF FRENCH
LANGUAGE ORIGINAL) OF JUST RECEIVED REPORT, DATED FEBRUARY 11,
ON ANGOLAN SITUATION CIRCULATED BY ITALIAN DEL. REPORT IS
BASED ON INFORMATION FROM ITALIAN EMBASSY IN HAVANA.

BEGIN TEXT:

AFTER ITS RECENT SUCCESSES, THE MPLA OFFENSIVE WILL
PROBABLY PAUSE, SO AS TO CONSOLIDATE ITS GAINS MILITARILY,
ADMINISTRATIVELY, AND ECONOMICALLY. IN FACT, THE SETTING UP OF
SECRET

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ADMINISTRATIVE AND ECONOMIC MACHINERY IS NECESSARY FOR THE
MPLA IS ORDER TO CONTINUE AND REINFORCE ITS OFFENSIVE.
REPORTEDLY, THE NUMBER OF CUBAN ADMINISTRATIVE AND ECONOMIC
ADVISERS IS BEING INCREASED FOR THIS PURPOSE. ON THE OTHER

HAND, THE CUBAN TROOPS HAVE UP UNTIL NOW WON THE " ASPHALT WAR". CERTAIN AREAS WHERE THEY SHOULD FOLLOW UP THEIR OFFENSIVE WOULD INVOLVE GUERRILLA WARFARE FOR WHICH THE CUBANS DO NOT APPEAR TO BE PARTICULARLY PREPARED. THIS WOULD THUS IMPLY THE NEED TO DEVELOP NEW TACTICAL OPERATIONS (E.G. AIR SUPPORT, THE USE OF A LARGER NUMBER OF COMMANDOS AS WELL AS HELICOPTER TRANSPORT, WHICH WAS USED FOR THE FIRST TIME DURING THE CAPTURE OF RIO CUEVE).

A PAUSE WOULD ALSO APPEAR NECESSARY FOR A RAPPROCHEMENT WITH THE USSR, WHICH IS REPORTEDLY NOT DISPOSED TO EXTEND THE CONFLICT TO ZONES BELIEVED TO BE DANGEROUS. THE SOVIETS BELIEVE THAT, FOR THE MOMENT, THE PRESENT LIMIT OF THE OFFENSIVE WILL PROVIDE THE MPLA WITH A SOLID PSYCHOLOGICAL BRIDGEHEAD, BOTH TO IMPRESS THE "PRO-IMPERIALIST" MOVEMENTS AS WELL AS TO INFLUENCE THE COUNTRIES THAT SUPPORT THESE MOVEMENTS. OPPOSED TO THIS SOVIET CAUTION, ONE FINDS A MORE " AGGRESSIVE" CUBAN POSITION WHICH WOULD RATHER LEAN TOWARD PURSUING MILITARY OPERATIONS SO AS TO MOVE THE MPLAS POSITIONS CLOSER TO ZAIRE AND NAMIBIA IN THE HOPE OF STIMULATING ACTION BY LOCAL " REVOLUTIONARY AND PROGRESSIVE FORCES". IN ANY EVENT, THE CONDUCT OF OPERATIONS IS REPORTEDLY IN THE HANDS OF THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE CUBAN TROOPS, ASSISTED IN CERTAIN AREAS (TANKS, AIRCRAFT, GROUND-TO-GROUND MISSILES) BY SOVIET ADVISERS.

AS REGARDS POSSIBLE TRIPS TO ANGOLA BY CUBAN REPRESENTATIVES, A RUMOR IS CIRCULATING IN HAVANA THAT CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARY JORGE RIQUET AND DEPUTY MINISTER OF THE ARMED FORCES VECINO ALEGRET MADE BRIEF VISITS TO ANGOLA. IN THE LAST FEW DAYS, IT HAS BEEN HINTED THAT MINISTER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES RAUL CASTRO INSPECTED CUBAN CONTINGENTS (THIS REPORT IS CONFIRMED BY THE ROMANIANS BUT THIS MUST BE TREATED WITH THE USUAL CAVEATS).

ACCORDING TO CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION FURNISHED BY
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FATHER LOREDO (A CUBAN PRIEST RECENTLY FREED AFTER TEN YEARS OF POLITICAL DETENTION), IT APPEARS THAT DURING THE LAST SEVERAL MONTHS MANY YOUNG MEN HAVE BEEN ARRESTED AND INCARCERATED IN THE HAVANA POLITICAL PRISON, PROBABLY FOR REFUSING TO GO TO ANGOLA.

AIR TRANSPORT OF THE NEW CONTINGENTS DESTINED FOR ANGOLA REPORTEDLY CONTINUES TO PRESENT PROBLEMS, DESPITE THE GROWING NUMBER OF TUPOLEV 62 E'S PUT AT CUBA'S DISPOSAL BY THE SOVIETS. THIS EXPLAINS THE PRESSURE PUT BY HAVANA ON THE GOVERNMENTS OF BARBADOS AND TRINIDAD/ TOBAGO WITH A VIEW TO OBTAINING RESUMPTION OF THE REFUELING STOPS FOR CUBAN TURBOPROPS HEADED FOR ANGOLA.

WITH THE SAME AIM IN MIND, CUBAN TECHNICIANS HAVE
REPORTEDLY GONE TO GUYANA TO INSTALL REFUELING AND SUPPLY
FACILITIES AT THE AIRPORT OF TIMHERI SO AS TO OVERCOME THE
OBSTACLES CREATED BY THE REFUSAL OF "TEXACO OIL" TO REFUEL
THE CUBAN AIRCRAFT. END TEXT. STREATOR

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